

# NO MAN'S LAND A ROMANCE

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## SYNOPSIS.

Garrett Coast, a young man of New York City, meets Douglas Blackstock, who invites him to a card party. He accepts, although he dislikes Blackstock, the reason being that both are in love with Katherine Thaxter.

## CHAPTER I.—(Continued.)

He felt her eyes upon him, seriously sweet and questioning, and frowned slightly, wishing he had held his tongue, though aware that he could not have, caring the way he did.

"Why not tell me? I'm waiting, Garrett."

"Well, . . . It was difficult; an impertinence; incredible, besides. But now that he had committed himself, he stiffened a resolve and plunged. "It was said that your engagement to this man Blackstock would be announced before long."

That out bluntly, he caught a long breath and, divided between fear and faith, sat watching her.

The seconds of her silence spun for him an hour of anguish.

"Katherine."

She turned. "Yes?"

"Have you nothing to say?" he asked involuntarily, and at once regretted it.

"What do you wish me to say?" Her tone was dull, as if she spoke mechanically, with a mind detached.

"Either affirm or deny. You owe me that, at least."

"Do I?" She seemed surprised.

"But what," she pursued, rousing, "does this man Blackstock?"

"You know I don't like him, Katherine. I can't."

"But I can and do, Garrett."

There was simplicity in that, almost confessional. His tears assailed him more imperiously.

"Then it's true? Don't tell me that!"

"What does Mr. Blackstock say?"

"I haven't interviewed him, of course. I seemed too absurd—"

"Why?"

The only report he had at command was pitifully inadequate: "Because I love you."

"Is that any reason why Mr. Blackstock should not?"

"There are reasons why you shouldn't let your name be coupled with his."

"And they are—?"

She put it crisply. His heart sank, foreseeing defeat. He veered at a tangent, evasive. "You haven't answered me. Is there any truth in this rumor?"

"Not yet."

"You mean it may be true—later?"

"It's possible," she affirmed quietly. "Mr. Blackstock has asked me to marry him; he hasn't as yet had my answer."

"Katherine! . . . You can't really care for him?"

"I'm trying to be sure, Garrett, before I tell him so—or you."

"But—but you mustn't! . . . The thing's impossible. . . . You—"

"You'll tell me why?"

Her composure was sobering. He got himself more in hand; she was not to be moved by storming, he knew. Reason, logic, an appeal to her intelligence; she would require these of him. Yet when put to it he could not bring himself to tell what he knew of the man by hearsay, if very credibly. Personal defects, lack of breeding, and the like were all unstable objections. . . . In the end the best he could do, since some sort of an answer was essential, was to frame a halting, inconclusive: "He's not the sort."

She misinterpreted his confusion. "I know what you're thinking: that he's not a spoke in our particular social wheel; an outsider. Must I condemn him for that? Are there no right men, Garrett, but yourself and others of our 'set' I know he has his lacks; I fancy you'd call him crude, if you were candid with me. But men of his genius, his upbringing. . . . Not that I concede any crudity in him; it's hardly that; he merely lacks—something—difficult to name it; not cultivation, not sensibility, but, I'd say, friends."

"He has many. . . ."

So she cared enough to fight for him! There was bitterness, surpassing the bitterness of aloes, in that discovery.

"I mean the right kind, yourself, for instance; friends to bring him out. He's quick, adaptable, of a good family—if not a wealthy one."

Coast fell back upon the one mentionable objection of which he had certain knowledge. "He's got a villainous temper."

"Friends would teach him to control it. And there are excuses for that; his sight—his eyes are in a bad way. He injured them seriously, somehow,

in his work—something about the spark, I believe."

"Those wireless experiments of his?"

"Yes. He's going to do great things, Garrett."

"Late in the field."

"He leads it today; they all look to him. His inventions, discoveries, improvements, will make wireless as every-day a thing as the telephone."

"I don't mean he couldn't win without friends; he's strong enough."

"Men have little use for him, Katherine."

"Women have."

Coast struggled temptation. . . . "He has magnetism."

"That and strength, ambition, enthusiasm. He's worth being a friend to. I want you to know him better, to like him, Garrett."

After a little he managed to say: "I'll try, if you wish."

"I do wish. Please, Garrett."



"Brains, Rather," Observed Van Tuyl Blandly.

"Then I'm to understand you seriously contemplate marrying him?"

Her "Yes!" was absolute.

"Don't you see?"—he hated himself for this—he's after your money, Katherine!"

"Garrett, that is unworthy of you."

He said nothing, doggedly taking what comfort he might from the knowledge that he was right.

Gradually he comprehended that in the course of their conversation the car had left Fifth Avenue at the Plaza and was crossing Central Park at the Seventy-second Street entrance.

"We're near the gate," he said abruptly. "If you'll drop me there, please—"

"Certainly. Tell Patrick."

Coast groped for the speaking tube and communicated with the driver. When he sat back he was conscious of the woman's softening regard.

"You're not angry, Katherine?"

"No, Garrett; but I'm very, very sorry."

"If I've seemed presumptuous—"

"To me, Garrett? Can you remember the time when we were not—"

"No. . . . I want you to understand that it wasn't altogether because I want you myself—need you, because I love you—as you know—"

"I don't want you to make a mistake. Wait, Katherine, wait a little before deciding. I'm sure of your heart; it won't misguide you."

"I believe not. I know my heart and mind."

"You know mine," he said gently, and no more.

That stabbed her; she winced, wondering why. But the personality

of Douglas Blackstock stood forth so largely, hunched in such vivid coloring, in the foreground of her consciousness, that there was left little room, even for old friends such as Garrett Coast.

Afoot, Coast lingered at the door, keen eyes searching hers almost plaintively.

"I'll drop in for tea tomorrow, if you ask me, Katherine."

"Have you ever needed an invitation, Garrett?"

"Then I'll come."

He nodded to the driver and the car swept away.

Long after it had shot out of sight, he stood staring. Then discovering himself bareheaded, hat and stick in hand, an object of amused regard, with a curt laugh of confusion and awakened self-consciousness, he turned back through the park.

## CHAPTER II.

Resigning with little reluctance his place at the card table to Dundas, whose turn it was to cut in, Coast lighted a cigarette and wandered round the dining-room of Blackstock's apartment, idly inspecting the half-dozen hunting-prints that adorned the green burlap walls.

Unspenkably bored, he went to the buffet, where he poured a very little Scotch into a tall glass, drowning it with icy charged water. He had refused to drink up to that moment, and was thirsty, but as he sat sipping and watching the players, Van Tuyl's un-

spite of, perhaps because of, the wit he wielded like a whip-lash. Excesses fanned that brilliancy to a burning frenzy; at such times he knew no friends, and those who knew him avoided him; his wits, submerged, frothed with a satiric humor that etched as indelibly as an acid when he did not lay on with a bludgeon of vituperation. . . . A dangerous foil to Blackstock, Coast thought, comparing them, wondering that they were so much together. Contrasting them he thought: fire and tow, rapier and broadsword!

Blackstock was the broadsword of that comparison, heavy and cumbersome if capable. Without an effort he dominated the others, Van Tuyl always excepted; the sheer weight of Blackstock's personality forced them into the background. Little Dundas, with his deferential smile, delicately pink face and permanently rounded shoulders, seemed the veriest shadow of a man; Blackstock's shadow he had apparently constituted himself. Truax, round of face and blandly practical, if unquestionably independent, was only less dwarfed by his host.

"A good bridge!"—Blackstock in the current slang; giving himself wholly to the game, playing to win, "wolfing the tricks," Van Tuyl told him.

The comment brought a darkish smile to the man's face.

"What d'you want me to do with 'em?" he growled semi-humorously, flipping a card from his hand and as swiftly making his play from dummy. "Make you a present of 'em?"

Play to that, now; come through with that ten-spot." He chuckled as he gathered in the trick and led the final card from dummy. "That'll teach you to double my original make, I guess. . . . Game and rubber, Dunny; six without, doubled, and a little slam. Got that down?"

"Yes," replied Dundas, grinning feebly as he jotted down the score.

"Tough luck, partner," Truax observed to Van Tuyl. "You couldn't help doubling on your hand, of course, and equally of course I had to be chicaned in hearts."

"Brains, rather," observed Van Tuyl blandly, shuffling.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

## WHEN THE EYESIGHT FAILS

Then Things Look Good to One That Everyone Else Is Criticizing Harshly.

"Everything has its compensations," declared the man whose hair is gray, over his ears and who can't read fine print as easily as he could ten years ago. "Yes, sir! Things look good to me that I hear other people criticizing like the mischief. Every girl has a flawless companion; everybody's hair looks as if it grew there and didn't have to be pinned on; all my friends are handsome; the streets seem clean and my clothes look new."

"Then, when I put on my spectacles—! But I've learned not to, except when I want to read. When my straw hat gets too spotty my good wife punches me up and says it's time to buy a new one, and when she needs a frock she just quietly hauls my specs out of my pocket, hands them to me pointedly, and stands before me in a good light. Rose-colored spectacles are all right, she tells me, when I'm looking at her face, but she prefers me to inspect her last summer's gown with my strongest, clearest lenses."

## Grown Cautious.

Chatty Lodger (to landlord)—"You seem to have seen a good deal. What are you?" Landlord—"Well, sir, I were a lion tamer, and I'd be there now if I hadn't a married. But you see, my wife were a knife-thrower in the same show, and she got to practicing her turn on me. Well, thinks I, life ain't too long to run no risks, so I took on a safe job and become a steeplejack."—Punch.

## Religious Part in Health

It is the Interpreter of Sickness and Death, and of Health as Well.

There is a great deal of nonsense written about religion and health; there is a great deal of sense in really connecting the two. There are a great many religious people who get sick and die. A great many irreligious people who do the same thing. It would be possible to get figures to prove anything you like in this connection. But they would not prove the truth. A clear mind, a pure heart and a cheerful spirit stand a better chance in the face of disease, than a muddy mind, a dirty heart and an ugly spirit. Health is a by-product, but a sure product of religion. But there are few of us who get religion enough to successfully combat our own foolishness in other directions. So we get sick and die. And there are many worse things than these in life. Religion is the interpreter of sickness and death, and health as well. Fearsome things are those which are not understood. Religion explains sickness and death and we can adjust

ourselves to these great blessings. Religion explains health and shows how it means opportunity and obligation; that is religion clarifies all experiences, we see them as they are, adjust them to each other and ourselves to all, and such an adjustment is not far from a condition of health. Religion will not set a broken leg, but will contribute very largely to its healing, through keeping the sources of healing pure. A clean heart produces a clean mind, a clean mind insures a clean body and a clean body is conducive to health.—Universalist Leader.

## Different.

"Why, a year ago you told me this place was easily worth \$15,000. Now you estimate its value at less than \$10,000."

"You must remember that I was trying to sell it to you then. Now you want me to sell it for you."

## Shoes of Snake Skin.

Shoes made of snake skin are worn by many ultra fashionable English women this year.

## WISH AT LAST CAME TRUE

Arbuthnot Witheredge Had Long Wanted to Be Alone With Genevieve Grandlot.

"Well," said Arbuthnot Witheredge, "I am in luck to find you alone, this evening."

"O," replied Genevieve Grandlot, "do you consider it lucky to be alone with me?"

"Why shouldn't I?"

"I—I don't know. I have never thought about it before."

"Haven't you ever wished that you and I might be all alone together?"

"Why should I wish that?"

"I don't know. I wish you had wished it."

"Have you ever wished it?"

"A great many times."

"Why?"

"Can you ask me why?"

"Perhaps I could—could guess."

"Would you care if I should tell you why?"

"I—I don't know. Do you think I ought to let you tell me why?"

"I wish you would. I am going to tell you. It is because I—"

"Because you what?"

"I wonder if you will hate me after I have told you? Rather than have you decide that we can no longer be friends, I would carry the secret to my grave."

"O, please don't do anything like that. I am sure I shall not hate you. I could never hate you, no matter what happened."

"Do you mean that, Miss Grandlot—Genevieve?"

"Of course. Why shouldn't I?"

"I shall risk all, then, and tell you. I have wanted to be alone with you because—because I love you—because I have wanted to ask you to be mine!"

Then the beautiful girl's mother stole away from her place behind the curtain and tiptoed up the back stairs.

## Maine Blueberries.

Washington county's blueberry crop has netted this year a revenue of more than \$1,000,000, according to State Horticulturist Albert K. Gardner of Rockland. This industry was started but a few years ago in that county and the yield this year is the largest yet obtained there. One grower realized \$75 from a few bushels which he set out in his orchard as a "side issue." A man near Cherryfield is said to have raked blueberries from the vines just as cranberries are gathered. It is stated that fabulous prices are paid for rental of blueberry lands and blueberry factories and the canning factories are still running.—Keenebeck Journal.

## Aerial Scout Work.

As an example of what German military airmen are already able to do, the performance of Lieutenant Mackenthun recently is cited. In a space of 35 minutes Lieutenant Mackenthun, who was acting for the red force, rose and flew around the enemy's front and was back on the ground at his headquarters ready to report. To obtain the same results would have taken a strong force of cavalry four hours.

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